



March Quarter 1996

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:30 AM THURS 20 JUNE 1996

Actual and Expected Private Mineral Exploration

Australia

Statistics ■

NOTES

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

ISSUE (Quarter)

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June 1996

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20 December 1996

INQUIRIES

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W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

MAIN FEATURES

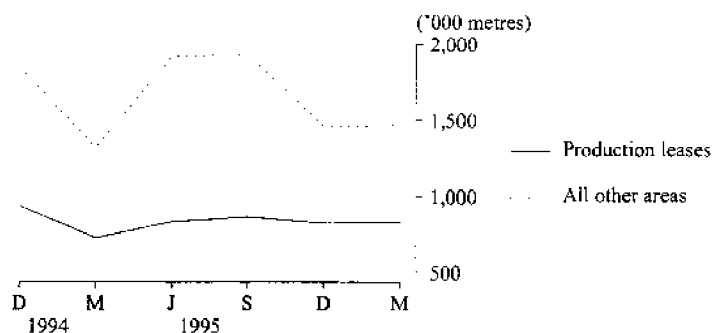
MINERALS EXPLORATION (OTHER THAN FOR PETROLEUM)

Exploration expenditure in the March quarter 1996 totalled \$218.2 million, a decrease of 4.8% from the December quarter 1995. Exploration expenditure was 14.7% higher than in the March quarter 1995.

Expenditure on production leases in the March quarter 1996 increased by 14.2% from the previous quarter, and was 20.1% higher than the March quarter 1995. Expenditure on all other areas decreased by 9.8% from the December quarter 1995, and was 13% higher than in the March quarter 1995.

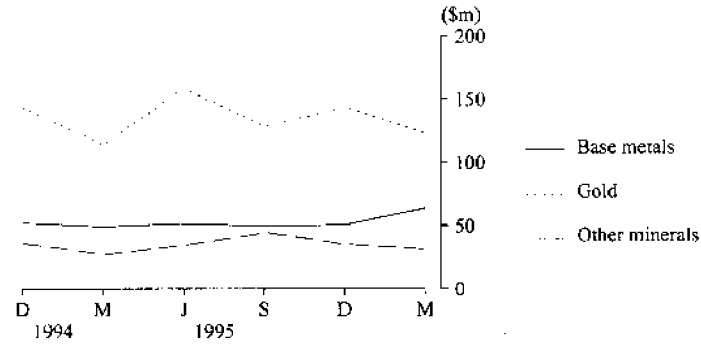
The total metres drilled during the March quarter 1996 (2.3 million metres) was marginally higher (0.9%) than in the December quarter 1995, and 12.6% higher than in the March quarter 1995. Metres drilled on production leases and on all other areas for the March quarter 1996 slightly increased (1% and 0.9%, respectively) when compared with December quarter 1995.

METRES DRILLED BY TYPE OF LEASE

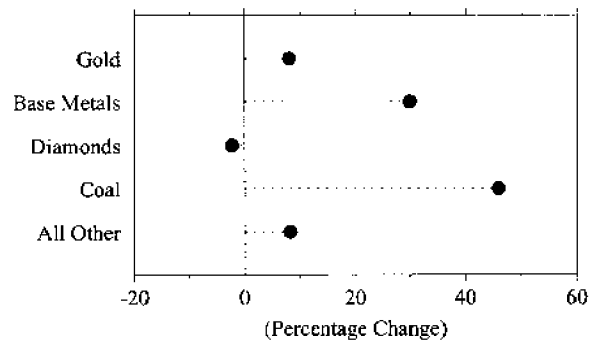


Exploration for base metals in the March quarter 1996 increased 26.5% (\$13.4 million) and was 29.9% (\$14.7 million) higher than in the December quarter 1995 and March quarter 1995, respectively. Exploration for gold decreased 14.2% (\$20.4 million) compared with the December quarter 1995, but was 8.0% (\$9.1 million) higher than the March quarter 1995.

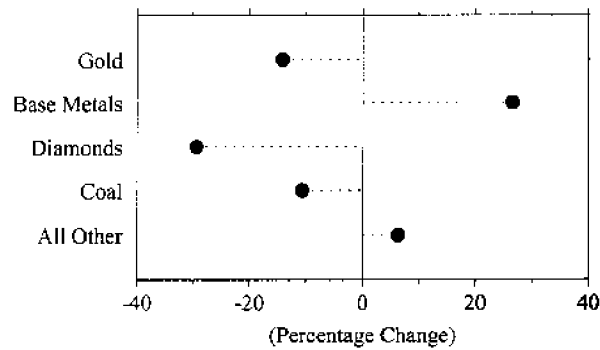
MINERAL EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE BY MINERAL SOUGHT



March quarter 1995 to March quarter 1996



December quarter 1995 to March quarter 1996



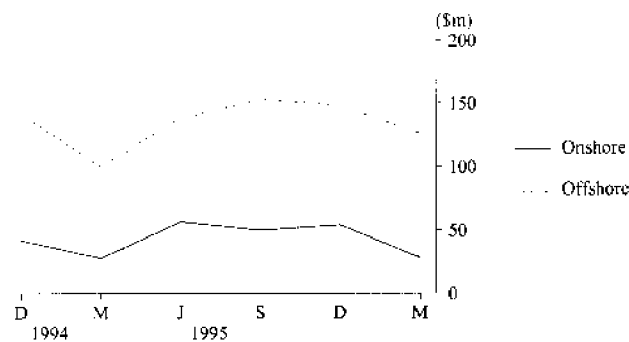
PETROLEUM EXPLORATION

Total expenditure on petroleum exploration in the March quarter 1996 was \$153.6 million, a decrease of 24.1% from the December quarter 1995 but 19.8% more than in the March quarter 1995.

Expenditure on production leases decreased by 8.3% compared with the March quarter 1995. Expenditure on all other areas increased by 25.2% over the same period.

Total onshore exploration (\$28.1 million) decreased by 48.3% from the December quarter 1995 but was the same as expenditure in the March quarter 1995. Total offshore exploration decreased 15.1% from the December quarter 1995 and increased 25.4% when compared with the March quarter 1995.

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE



1 PRIVATE EXPLORATION, Actual and Expected Expenditure

Period	Mineral (other than for petroleum)			Petroleum onshore			Petroleum offshore		
	Expenditure		Actual as a percentage of expected	Expenditure		Actual as a percentage of expected	Expenditure		Actual as a percentage of expected
	Actual	Expected(a)		Actual	Expected(a)		Actual	Expected(a)	
	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	%
1990-91	601.7	452.6	132.9	217.1	165.8	130.9	365.4	326.8	111.8
1991-92	604.0	466.5	129.5	135.3	191.3	70.7	338.8	344.0	98.5
1992-93	631.8	532.8	118.6	115.2	131.1	87.9	496.7	438.5	113.3
1993-94	792.6	553.0	143.3	144.5	100.1	144.4	362.1	459.2	78.9
1994-95	893.3	768.8	116.2	169.0	120.3	140.5	519.8	592.1	87.8
Six months ended									
December 1994	458.4	349.2	131.3	84.0	58.8	142.9	281.1	336.3	83.6
June 1995	434.9	419.6	103.6	85.0	61.5	138.2	238.7	255.8	93.3
December 1995	452.2	372.3	121.5	104.3	84.4	123.6	301.1	207.4	145.2
June 1996	n.y.a.	401.3	n.y.a.	n.y.a.	101.2	n.y.a.	n.y.a.	220.4	n.y.a.

(a) As reported in a previous census. See Explanatory Notes see paragraph 9.

2 MINERAL EXPLORATION (Other than for Petroleum), Expenditure and Metres Drilled

Period	Expenditure (\$m)			Metres drilled ('000 metres)		
	On production leases	On all other areas	Total	On production leases	On all other areas	Total
	1990-91	115.4	486.3	601.7	1 760	4 452
1991-92	130.9	473.1	604.0	1 626	4 253	5 877
1992-93	148.4	483.4	631.8	1 944	5 049	6 993
1993-94	184.4	608.1	792.6	2 770	6 810	9 580
1994-95	202.5	690.7	893.3	3 329	7 001	10 330
1994-95						
September qtr	51.0	175.0	226.1	833	1 918	2 751
December qtr	51.1	181.2	232.3	938	1 847	2 785
March qtr	44.8	145.5	190.3	726	1 319	2 045
June qtr	55.6	189.0	244.6	832	1 917	2 749
1995-96						
September qtr	44.8	178.1	222.9	866	1 933	2 799
December qtr	47.1	182.2	229.3	824	1 458	2 282
March qtr	53.8	164.4	218.2	832	1 471	2 303

3 MINERAL EXPLORATION (Other than for Petroleum), Expenditure By State (\$m)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	Australia
1990-91	60.6	12.7	124.1	15.5	324.8	9.9	53.9	601.7
1991-92	63.3	12.6	109.9	19.7	332.8	7.9	57.8	604.0
1992-93	60.9	12.2	117.9	21.3	348.1	7.8	63.5	631.8
1993-94	73.6	20.7	140.2	24.7	453.7	10.2	69.5	792.6
1994-95	79.2	31.2	176.0	20.9	495.5	14.9	75.8	893.3
1994-95								
September qtr	18.4	6.7	45.0	4.6	127.5	2.8	21.1	226.1
December qtr	18.3	6.5	53.7	5.1	126.4	2.9	19.3	232.3
March qtr	19.8	9.3	32.4	4.6	106.3	4.0	14.1	190.3
June qtr	22.7	8.7	44.9	6.6	135.3	5.2	21.3	244.6
1995-96								
September qtr	20.5	8.2	43.8	5.6	124.9	2.5	17.5	222.9
December qtr	17.7	11.5	39.4	6.6	128.9	5.6	19.5	229.3
March qtr	19.2	10.1	40.9	5.1	117.8	6.0	19.1	218.2

4 MINERAL EXPLORATION (Other than for Petroleum) Expenditure By Type of Mineral Sought By State, March Quarter 1996 (\$m)

State	Copper, silver-lead- zinc, nickel and cobalt	Gold	Iron ore	Mineral sands	Tin, tungsten, scheelite, wolfram	Uranium	Coal	Con- struction materials	Diamonds	Other	Total
New South Wales	8.2	6.8	—	n.p.	—	—	2.8	—	n.p.	0.2	19.2
Victoria	n.p.	7.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	n.p.	n.p.	10.1
Queensland	21.1	11.2	—	n.p.	n.p.	n.p.	7.6	—	—	0.6	40.9
South Australia	n.p.	1.5	—	—	—	n.p.	n.p.	—	0.2	n.p.	5.1
Western Australia	21.8	83.9	3.6	1.5	—	n.p.	n.p.	—	4.9	1.4	117.8
Tasmania	2.6	3.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.0
Northern Territory	6.6	9.4	—	—	—	0.9	—	—	2.1	—	19.1
Australia	63.9	123.3	3.6	2.0	n.p.	n.p.	10.8	—	8.4	4.4	218.2

5 MINERAL EXPLORATION (Other than for Petroleum), Expenditure By Type of Mineral Sought, Australia (\$m)

Period	Copper, silver-lead- zinc, nickel and cobalt	Gold	Iron ore	Mineral sands	Tin, tungsten, scheelite, wolfram	Uranium	Coal	Con- struction materials	Diamonds	Other	Total
1990-91	171.8	300.8	11.2	19.2	2.4	12.8	23.1	2.7	39.0	18.5	601.7
1991-92	144.9	304.7	36.9	13.9	1.7	12.8	27.5	1.6	35.7	24.3	604.0
1992-93	183.4	320.1	24.0	9.8	0.5	8.8	24.2	1.1	38.1	21.9	631.8
1993-94	191.6	453.7	18.8	8.5	1.1	7.6	27.7	1.3	58.7	23.5	792.6
1994-95	201.0	554.5	12.1	5.8	1.1	7.8	38.0	0.9	48.4	23.5	893.3
1994-95											
September qtr	47.8	138.2	2.9	1.9	0.1	2.1	10.7	0.1	17.0	5.2	226.1
December qtr	52.5	143.5	2.5	1.8	0.4	1.7	10.6	0.2	12.5	6.5	232.3
March qtr	49.2	114.2	1.4	1.5	0.2	1.8	7.4	0.2	8.6	5.8	190.3
June qtr	51.5	158.6	5.3	0.6	0.4	2.2	9.3	0.4	10.3	6.1	244.6
1995-96											
September qtr	49.8	128.5	4.9	2.1	0.1	2.1	12.7	0.6	15.3	6.9	222.9
December qtr	50.5	143.7	1.1	1.6	0.2	2.3	12.1	—	11.9	5.9	229.3
March qtr	63.9	123.3	3.6	2.0	n.p.	n.p.	10.8	—	8.4	4.4	218.2

6 PETROLEUM EXPLORATION EXPENDITURE (\$m)

Period	Onshore			Offshore			Total expenditure		
	Drilling	Other	Total	Drilling	Other	Total	On	On	Total
							production leases	all other areas	
1990-91	128.8	88.3	217.1	257.1	108.4	365.4	131.2	451.4	582.6
1991-92	60.5	75.0	135.3	142.2	196.4	338.8	70.4	403.6	473.9
1992-93	62.8	52.4	115.2	283.7	213.1	496.7	69.1	542.9	611.9
1993-94	84.4	60.0	144.5	208.0	154.2	362.2	70.1	436.5	506.7
1994-95	85.6	83.5	169.0	384.9	134.9	519.8	104.7	584.2	688.8
1994-95									
September qtr	26.0	15.8	41.7	108.5	30.2	138.7	28.9	151.5	180.5
December qtr	17.2	25.1	42.3	106.7	35.7	142.4	25.9	158.7	184.7
March qtr	11.9	16.2	28.1	73.6	26.5	100.1	20.6	107.6	128.2
June qtr	30.5	26.4	56.9	96.1	42.5	138.6	29.3	166.4	195.7
1994-95									
September qtr	30.9	19.2	50.0	120.4	32.8	153.2	17.7	185.6	203.2
December qtr	28.7	25.6	54.3	103.9	44.0	147.9	19.6	182.7	202.3
March qtr	13.6	14.5	28.1	85.4	40.1	125.5	18.9	134.7	153.6

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 This publication contains annual and quarterly statistics of private sector exploration for minerals (other than oil shale) in Australia.

SOURCE

2 Data are collected and compiled from the exploration censuses conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

SCOPE AND COVERAGE

3 All exploration activity is included, regardless of the main activity of the explorer. Details of exploration are collected from all private enterprises known to be engaged in exploration.

4 From September quarter 1989 details of mineral explorers reporting less than \$5,000 per quarter have been excluded from the tables, resulting in a small break in the series from 1989-90. Data linking the two collection methodologies for tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 are contained in the September quarter 1990 issue.

CLASSIFICATION

5 The following categories are used:

- *Production lease/Other*, where a production lease is an area on which production or development is actually taking place.
- *Onshore/Offshore*, where offshore includes all operations in a marine area under the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967* or under any Acts administered by State and Territory Governments.
- *Drilling/Other*, where *drilling expenditure* includes cost of access (roads, vessel hire, etc.) to the drilling site and site preparation etc., and *other expenditure* includes costs of surveys, report writing, map preparation and all other activities attributable to exploration.

DEFINITIONS

6 *Minerals*. In the broad sense these comprise metallic minerals, construction materials, gemstones, other non-metallic minerals and petroleum (oil or gas).

7 *Exploration*. This includes the search for new ore occurrences or undiscovered oil or gas, and/or appraisal intended to delineate or greatly extend the limits of known deposits of minerals or oil or gas reservoirs by geological, geophysical, geochemical, drilling or other methods. This includes construction of shafts and adits primarily for exploration purposes but excludes activity of a developmental or production nature. Exploration for water is excluded.

8 *Exploration expenditure*. This covers all expenditure on exploration activity in Australia. It includes expenditure on aerial surveys (including landsat photographs), general surveys, report writing, map preparation and other activities indirectly attributable to exploration. Cash bids for offshore petroleum exploration permits are also included.

9 *Expected expenditure*. This refers to expected expenditure on exploration as reported by private enterprise explorers who were included in the previous census. Events such as new discoveries,

unexpected weather conditions, government policy changes and unforeseen changes in economic conditions may cause actual expenditures to differ from those previously expected. The differences between actual and expected expenditure can be seen in table 1.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

10 Users may also wish to refer to the following priced publication which are available on request:

Australian Mining Industry, 1993-94 (8414.0)

Australian Business Expectations (5250.0)

Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia (5625.0)

11 Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Release Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Release Advice are available from any ABS office.

12 Publications showing the details of wells and metres drilled in petroleum exploration are available from the Petroleum Resource Assessment Branch of the Bureau of Resource Sciences.

SYMBOLS AND OTHER USAGES

n.y.a.	not yet available
n.p.	not available for separate publication but included in totals
n.a.	not available
—	nil or rounded to zero
r	figures revised since previous issue



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